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ON THE
PERCEPTION OF NATURAL BEAUTY,

BY THE
ANCIENTS AND THE MODERNS.

ROME, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

TWO LECTURES

DELIVERED
ON THE 10TH OF DÉCEMBER, 1855, AND ON THE
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LECTURE I.

THE title which a Lecture bears will seldom convey an accurate idea of what its author intends. He endeavours, no doubt, to express in a few words the subject of which it will treat, but it can hardly prepare the future hearer for his method, and his particular view. We might as well expect the inscription which once graced the front of a destroyed temple, found in a field, to teach us what were the proportions, the materials, or even the architecture of the ancient edifice. It may have inscribed on it—"To Jove the Thunderer," or "To Minerva the Healing," or "To the God Rediculus," or "To Antoninus and Faustina;" but what manner of building it indicated to the traveller, no one could tell, unless some fragment at least, a broken capital, a shaft, or a splintered cornice, remained to guide us.

And yet, perhaps, to continue the illustration, the boldness and dimensions of the very inscription might allow us at least to conjecture, whether great or small was the structure to which it gave a name. And so far, I hope, the title of my Lecture may not mislead. Each one may have built up for it "the fabric of a vision," his own idea, probably more stately, more beautiful, more finished

than the reality will prove ; and, so far, he may be doomed to disappointment. But at any rate the title will express how copious, how vast, how unbounded is the theme which I have undertaken to illustrate.

For short as is that title, it encloses the whole range of natural beauty, from the mountain chain, with its snows and huge forests, to the green sward and its flowers ; art pictorial, in all its branches, descriptive in all its varieties, verse and prose. It comprises all ages and all nations—antiquity sacred and classical ; the mediæval and modern periods.

How, then, will it be possible to contain oneself within reasonable bounds ? Only, it appears to me, by not running beyond those of one's own thoughts ; by not wandering for new scenes into new roads, and losing oneself in others' speculations. One's own mind is limited ; one's reading circumscribed ; one's views perhaps narrowed ; at least one's vision is bounded by a horizon referable to position. Such is my only chance of not running riot, and carrying my audience over a vast field without path or landmark. I must be content to feed your kind curiosity only with such poor ideas as may spring from my own mind, or emanate from my own casual pursuits.

A question presents itself to us on our very threshold, and fairly claims an answer.

What is meant by " perception of natural beauty ? "

In its simplest meaning it describes, for objects which come under the combined senses, what the expression " an ear for music " does in reference to sounds. It is the power of noting and relishing the distinctive and characteristic graces of nature, in every part of creation, on sea and on land, by day and by night, in the heavens and on the earth ; elegance of form, beauty of colour, harmony of tints, play of light, sweetness of odours, combination of natural sounds ; whatever pleases, delights, raises the thoughts of man, in the contemplation of natural objects.

By beauty is not meant merely what is soft and soothing.

Manfred, sitting on an Alpine crag, watching the storm rolling along the valley ; Wordsworth, pursuing on the ice in cold November the " reflex of a star :"

" Image that flying still before him gleamed
Upon the glassy plain,"

were filled each with a distinct admiration and loving perception of one of nature's beauties.

Rising, however, still higher, we understand by the term the power of applying this perception, whether to pleasing or to instructing others ; that is, the power of communicating to others, by the pen or pencil, the impression which nature's beauties make upon our own minds and souls ; the becoming her mirrors, not insensible ones, but endowed with a power of combining, harmonising, condensing things distant and heterogeneous, and producing pictures of which no other eye has gathered together the elements, and projecting them on others' minds. This stands in the same relation to the first degree, as power of producing musical composition does to a musical ear—as Beethoven or Handel does to the ravished listener, who can fully taste and feel the exquisiteness of their movements and their combinations.

From all this must be excluded love of artistic beauty. For although nature is the foundation of art, and art only its representation, the two fields are so wide, their principles are so different, and their objects so separate, that they must be kept distinct. A thousand can relish a beautiful prospect, or love the " green and white," as Chaucer calls it, of a flowery meadow, for one who can even understand the beauty of a statue or a group, or the wonders of Raffaele's cartoons. Let it be therefore understood, that we leave aside, and leave safe in the keeping of the ancients, the beauty of form, and the supremacy in plastic art.

Who can doubt the keenness of perception of natural beauties among the ancients ? Of the men who chose for sites of their

citadels and temples, "Rhodes and Mitylene, Ephesus and Corinth, clasped between two arms of the meeting sea;" who whitened the coasts of Baïæ and Cajeta, and the hills of Tibur and Tusculum with their villas; and who imagined a Tempe, the nearest natural approach to the conception of a paradise?

Who can read their poets without feeling, in every page, how their eyes seized on the beautiful in nature, from grand scenery to the minute graces of the flower? The pastoral poetry of both classical languages is full of rich description of all that, combined, forms the delight of a refined rural life.

And yet I cannot but feel that there is wanting one ingredient to make even this lowest appreciation of natural beauty perfect. I do not think that the ancients entertained more than an admiration of nature—it hardly rose to love. The strong feeling for art prevailed over this simpler affection. You may see the dawn of this conflict in Homer's description of Alcinous's dwelling. How minutely are the walls, the pillars, the doors described, all of silver and gold and blue enamel; then statues of dogs life-like, but golden, in the vestibule, and of children on pedestals in the hall, bearing torches. But the gardens give more the idea of vineyard, orchard, and olive-garth combined, of profitable cultivation and rich produce, than of beauty enjoyed for its own sake. There is no sylvan grandeur, no sweetness of flowers, no naturally flowing streamlet. But there is enough of the more useful, if less picturesque, water-courses for irrigation and domestic supply. —(Odyss. lib. viii.)

So early are the architecture and sculpture of a princely residence objects paramount in the poet's mind, when expressing the feelings of his day; while the palace of nature, the garden, is but the storehouse of its luxurious table. Indeed, may we not say, that the beautiful rural scenes which he once groups together, were thought, by the father of profane poetry, too mean for insertion in his great writings, unless represented as embossed in gold upon a warrior's shield?

If we examine the ruins of ancient villas, we find that the buildings, the artificial ponds, the statues and fountains, objects in fact of art, must have occupied immense spaces ; while *quincunxes* and such other symmetrical modes of planting, admired by the possessors, exclude the idea of natural beauty or an eye that loved it. The public gardens of Rome were much in the same style. As early as Pompey's time they were planted in rows, and filled with statues of wild beasts, as if the realities of the amphitheatre were not sufficient for public gratification.

That they had a landscape art there can be no doubt. Pliny attests this, and they had their flower-painters as well. But nothing has come down to us to enable us to judge of this portion of their art. One cannot believe that they had painters, as distinctive in their way of representing nature as Claude, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, not to come down to later and even living artists ; or their works and style would have been more specified, and they would at least have created schools of second-rate artists, or a taste that would have perpetuated itself in inferior productions. But the walls of Pompeii attest the all-absorbing taste for figures ; nor do the artists who often so skilfully draw them trouble themselves about enriching them with landscape, or even back-ground.

It is no object of our inquiry which is the nobler department of art, any more than it is whether heroic poetry, the poetry of "arms and men," be not more elevated in kind than pastoral, the poetry of flowers and herds. Our only desire is to compare ancients and moderns in the one—be it the inferior order of poesy. I believe, then, that nature's beauties have found more real sympathetic love in modern feeling than they ever did among the ancients. The causes of this superiority may appear later ; I will now only illustrate the fact, and confine myself to our own literature.

This intense love is to be found in the father of our poetry, Chaucer. Narrow as was the limit of his knowledge, or the range

of his observation, he had those instinctive perceptions which affection always bestows. His descriptions of every aspect of nature, from the most gorgeous assemblage of what is luxuriously beautiful in tree and flower, hill and plain, land and water, fragrance and sound, to the most rough and rude—

“ With knotty, knarry barrein trees old,
Of stubbes sharp and hideous to behold,”

have not been surpassed by any modern poet.

When he enumerates the host of birds that assemble on St. Valentine's day, he gives to each so happy an epithet as to be at once most true and most picturesque.—(*Assembly of Fowls*.) And his “ Flower and Leaf,” in which he gives his preference to the latter as enduring beyond the perishable blossom, is full of delicate and loving description, to which Wordsworth does justice.

Indeed, so supreme is old Geoffery in this love of nature, that perhaps the most full and glowing descriptions of luxurious natural scenes in Spenser, nearly two hundred years later, and when our language had gained shape and fluency, are not merely imitated, but copied from the old bard. If time and your indulgence will permit me, I will read a passage from each, beginning with the elder poet.

“ On every bough the birdes heard I sing,
With voice of angell, in hir armonie,
That busied hem, hir birdes forth to bring,
The little pretty conies to her play gan hie,
And further all about I gan espie,
The dredful roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirrels, and beastes small, of gentle kind.

Of instruments of stringes in accord,
Heard I so play, a ravishing sweetnesse,
That God, that Maker is of all and Lorde,
Ne heard never better, as I gesse,
Therewith a wind, unneth it might be leese,
Made in the leaves grene a noise soft,
Accordant to the foules song on loft.”

The Assembly of Fowls.

Now listen to the beautiful lines of Spenser :—

“ Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
Such as attonce might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere :
Right hard it was for wight which did it heare,
To read what manner musicke that mote bee ;
For all that pleasing is to living care
Was there consorted in one harmonie ;
Birdes, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree :

The ioyous birdes, shrouded in cheareful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempted sweet ;
Th’ angelicall soft trembling voyces made
To th’ instruments divine response meet ;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmure of the waters full ;
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call ;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.”

The Fairy Queene, B. ii. Canto 12.

To do full justice to this comparison, more should be quoted, but the points of resemblance are sufficiently striking, even here ; the angel’s voice attributed to birds, the celestial strains from unseen origin joining in nature’s chorus, and the wind forming an under-part or accompaniment to both, are not accidental coincidences.

I will give two other passages, reversing the order, and beginning with the more recent poet :—

“ Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling pine ; the cedar proud and tall ;
The vine-propp elme ; the poplar never dry ;
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all ;
The aspine good for staves ; the cypresse funerall ;

The laurell, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage ; the firre that weepeth still ;
The willow, worne of forlorne paramours ;
The eugh obedient to the bender’s will ;

The birch for shaftes ; the saw for the mill ;
 The mirrhe sweete—bleeding in the bitter wound ;
 The warlike beech ; the ash for nothing ill ;
 The fruitful olive ; and the platane round ;
 The carver holme ; the maple seledom inward sound."

Book ii. Canto 1.

The following is the briefer catalogue of Chaucer, and there are some epithets in it which do not appear to me to have been improved by being changed :—

"The bilder oke, and eke the hardy asshe,
 The pillar elme, the coffre vnto caraine,*
 The boxe pipe tree, holme to whips lasshe,
 The sailing firre, the cipres death to plaine,
 The shooter ewe, the aspe for shaftes plaine,
 The olive of peace, and eke the drunken vine,
 The victor palme, the laurer to divine."

The Assembly of Fowls.

"The shooter yew," "the olive of peace," "the cipres death to plaine," that is, mourn, are preferable to their substitutes.

But before leaving these authors, I cannot but express a natural regret, that in both too much, but I think exclusively in the later one, every rich description of natural beauty is connected with wantonness, voluptuousness, and debauchery ; so as almost to drive one to the fear that, after all, virtue may well disdain to feed its thoughts even on the most innocent of earthly contemplations, and fly to the wilderness or the hermitage, and there nourish habitually penitential ideas.

I have chosen out Chaucer for more particular attention, not only because he really illustrates my subject, but because, while he is the first of our poets in age, he is the first great link between our poetical literature and that of foreign countries ; he represents to us here the age of Dante and Giotto, which had just preceded him. For the great poet of Italy died just seven years before his birth. This point of contact must be retained in mind for what has to follow later.

* Coffin for the corpse.

If I do not enter into the merits of many other writers, it is not from want of appreciation of their deserts. It is but a few evenings ago that, lecturing on a totally different subject,* I had the opportunity of expressing my admiration of Milton, where he describes with true love, the bright and the dark sides of nature, in his "Allegro" and his "Penseroso." But there he pays the justest tribute possible to one, whom we cannot pass over in silence, when he characterises Shakspeare as "nature's child."

It would be not only superfluous, but impertinent here to descant on the beauties of a poet, the delight of every English reader, or even to show how true this description of him is. For he possesses that rich unconscious love of nature, which is an instinct more than an acquisition, born rather than bred in the true poet's soul. He babbles of green woods as the stream does which flows through them; he lays him down at full length, with the melancholy Jaques,

"Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along that wood,"

moralising on the wounded stag: he comes forth at early morning with good Friar Laurence, to gather

"——— children of divers kind,
We sucking on (earth's) natural bosom find:"

he can indite lectures on politics with King Richard's gardener, from the leaves not of books, but of plants, from shrub, and tree, and flower, yet note with kindly heart the dropping of a queenly tear, to be commemorated on the spot by a characteristic monument.

"Here she did drop a tear: here in this place
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace."

Even into the wild regions of insanity this love pursues him; he hangs himself with "fantastic garlands of wild flowers" like Ophelia; he crouches under the pelting of the pitiless storm, and

* "On the Nature of an Inaugural Discourse:" now published by Messrs. Richardson.

raves at the blast with Lear. But never so graceful, never so light-some, so wayward, so ethereal is he in his love, as when he identifies himself with the rich and joyous creations of his brain; as when with his "dainty Ariel" he seems ready

"to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curled clouds;"

or appears rather, actually with him, to fly on the bat's back, to suck where the bee sucks, or lie in the cowslip's bell; or when, with the fairy, he still more delicately says,

"I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear."

It is not an external view of nature which he presents, a looking at it, as outside to himself; it is an image of her in his own mind which he describes; for he identifies himself with what he makes others say of her, with such hearty love, and such delicate appreciation, as prove how inly and how deeply her forms were graven on his heart. For it is not nature in her pageantry and state that he pays court and does homage to; he loves her best in her homely attire, in her modest and most domestic looks. He goes not, like Horace's page, to seek the last lingering roses in their hidden nooks; nor does he even care for the more showy and glowing beauties of the field, Ceres's "banks with peonied and liliated brims;" he loves the simple children of nature "sucking her breast" in the field, better than her fairy changelings in the garden; and the commonest wild flowers suffice for him to weave "virgin-crants" for his muse's brows. With Perdita, he loves rosemary, gillyflowers, marigolds, lavender, mint, and marjoram; or with Ophelia, fennel, columbine, and rue; still more

"Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty;
————— violets dim
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,

Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
 That die unmarried, ere they can behold
 Bright Phœbus in his strength;
 ————— bold oxlips, and
 The crown imperial, lilies of all kinds."

Winter's Tale.

Nay, even to the more uncultivated, to the very savage tribes, if there be such, of nature's beautiful offspring, he clings with love; the broom, the daisy, the poppy, cockle, dandelion, and the very nettles find their place in the posies of nature's loving child.

But did I wish to prove how truly this title belongs to him, I would do so by comparing him, not as is often, and, I think, unreasonably done with Homer or Dante, but with a poet of his own class and character, one who has followed him in the historical drama most closely, and who wrote in a language most akin to our own, the author of *Wallenstein*, of *Don Carlos*, and of *Maria Stuart*.

If I had to compare them together, I should say that Schiller resembles a modern sculptor, who will not begin his work till he has prepared a most accurate model, and has the finished figure, in wax or clay, standing before him. Every muscle, every vein, every hair must be there definitely marked. When he wrote his beautiful "Song of the Bell," so well imitated by Longfellow, in that of "The Ship," he made himself minutely acquainted with all the details of bell-casting; and when he composed his charming poem of the "Eisenhammer," it is said he studied all the peculiarities of the iron-foundry, and, I should say, penetrated even into the mysteries of a catholic sacristy.* And so it clearly seems to have been the case with his dramatic works; the manners, the costume, the phrases of the period were carefully studied; the very slang of the soldiery, and the quaint sermons of their preachers are faithful transcripts of by-gone realities: there is no danger of

* He so minutely describes the folding of the various vestments, the ringing of the bell, and other duties and ceremonies of the acolyte.

an error in geography, of an anachronism in history. All is beautifully accurate, all well arranged, nobly poised, and gracefully finished.

But Shakespeare I would compare to the ancient sculptor, or to one of Michelangelo's stamp. Content with a mere sketch before him (traced upon some old romance, or preceding play—he cares not for the vaunt of originality in first invention), he dashes at once into the block, from which his great and noble, or graceful, groups have to be hewn. At every one of his apparently random strokes on granite or on marble, he knocks out sparks of fire, or produces fresh sparkling surfaces that reflect light at a new angle. Now it looks as if the whole work would be smashed in pieces, now he seems to be playing about it, and doing nothing; till gradually wind out of the mass and stand revealed, forms of grandeur or of beauty, not faultless indeed, but in their nature matchless. The exquisite model was being shaped in the mind, where its mould lay hidden amidst treasures of creative art, while its solid representation was being produced in the study.

The tradition mentioned by Dryden, of Shakspeare's having said that he killed Mercutio in the third act, because he did not see how he could have carried him through (and what could have come to overmatch his Queen Mab?) and Ben Jonson's double assertion that he never erased a line once written, and that he had "an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped;"—these, and indications traceable in his dramas, show that he blocked out his pieces and their figures as he worked, sometimes (as Canova said he could see had been done by the great sculptor of the Athenian pediment*) driving his chisel too far, yet leaving the scar on the surface, rather than soften the bold muscles to its level.

But though I may be thought to carry this similitude too far,

* This was mentioned in my hearing by the late Cavalier D'Este, the secretary and confidential friend of Canova.

allow me to observe, that as a great artist would not disdain to carve upon the pedestal of a colossal hero, a delicately traced and almost suggestive sketch of something tenderly beautiful, so do we find in our great poet. For Rowe has well noticed, "what a task it would have been for the greatest masters of Greece and Rome to have expressed the passions designed by the sketch of statuary," conveyed in those well-worn lines—

————— "She pined in thought,
And sate, like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at Grief."

And I would add another instance. For reading the lines

"The grey-eyed Morn smiles on the frowning Night,
Checking the eastern clouds with streaks of light,"

brings at once before my eye Thorwaldsen's exquisite medallions of Morning and Night placed face to face, even to the very genius that waves the torch beneath the rosy clouds.

I must indeed hasten on, for we have higher spheres as yet to climb. But, before leaving this lower range, we must dwell a few moments, by way of illustration of this subject, on two modern, but both departed, poets. The first is one who, cut off yet young, had developed so enthusiastic a love of nature, and so vigorous a power of expressing it, that had his moral faculties been equal to his perceptive organisation, he would have stood without a rival in this class of poetry. The other lived to mature age, only to ripen and perfect his early affection for nature in its most noble form.

In Keats, the love of nature is a wild and almost frenzied passion, which pours itself out with a voluminous richness of imagery and diction, that carries you forward in rapture for a time. But by degrees you begin to feel the chillness of the torrent that bears you; even when rolling on through a sunny sky and genial atmosphere, its waters are icy cold. No moral glow, no virtuous emotion, no sight of that real Sun, the "intellectual Light" of

Dante, without whom nature is dull, cheers the most dainty landscape: and you disengage yourself with a sigh from the voluptuous stream, lamenting that such a bright spirit should have walked so entirely upon earth; but not wondering that "Endymion," the enamoured of the cold moon, should be the type of his cheerless affections.

Not so with Wordsworth, in whom the love of nature, and of her simplest forms, was sound, noble, and moral. He could muse for hours over the daisy on the sward, and he could exult in the majestic scenery of his own lake home. For he could bring the star and the glow-worm to converse together. His tone is ever healthy, his lessons rise above his text. His art seems to lie in the power of touching chords in his reader's heart which harmonise with his, though before concealed from himself, and awakening, by the very simplicity and naturalness of his thoughts, a kindred love for nature, pure and innocent, and a step to higher and better feelings.

To show you that these thoughts are not new, nor even now expressed by me for the first time, allow me to read you a very unpretending sonnet, written some twenty years ago, and, I believe, communicated by a friend, without any desire of mine, to the illustrious poet.

"Wordsworth! some men have said thou art not drest
In poet's livery; since thy artless rhyme
Flows like some lullaby's old soothing chime.
And I think with them; for it charms to rest
All fret of pride and passion in the breast,
And bears us far, in spite of jealous time,
Into our childhood's ever sunny clime,
To play with cherub thoughts, bright, pure, and blest.
They say thou art no poet: and methinks
It must be so. For when I read thy strain,
'Tis I that am the poet. For new links
Tie me to nature, spun not from thy brain,
But from mine own heart; as from wells it drinks,
Found by thy magic wand in drearest plain."

I will now proceed to the advantages which the modern possesses over the ancient contemplator of natural beauty, commencing with the lowest—enlarged means of observation. This I will illustrate by only one example.

After the mighty ocean (which, in its grandeur, it was given but to few of the ancients to contemplate), the most vast and awful aspect of nature, the one most awakening of a sense of the infinite, must have been the Lybian or the Syrian desert. Imagine a traveller looking forth upon it from the temple of Jupiter Ammon, in the great Oasis. Beyond the spot of verdure on which he stands, as on a rock in the sea, he beholds to the distant horizon but a waste of sand, with tracks marked only by the blanched bones of men and camels, interrupted here and there by the few sickly palms that denote the springs and stations on the path. Bleak, arid, houseless, inhospitable, but boundless and sublime, is this terrible landscape. In the neighbourhood may, perhaps, be seen the blighted tops of trees, or ruined walls, like masts and wrecks of ships on the sand-bank, showing the victory of the waste over the cultivated, and proving that the only life in that still wilderness is destruction: its only power is to ruin. “Awful,” he exclaims, “to think, that one must purchase the contemplation of nature’s grandest scenes at such a price, that when she wishes to show herself sublime, she must either withhold her hand and not create, or extend it and make desolate.”

“No,” replies the modern observer, as he stands on the edge of the rolling prairie, about to spur his snorting horse into its wilderness of green.

“No,” responds the wandering traveller, as he pushes on through the Texian desert, when its luxurious mimosas sensitively shrink and fall down, as in reverence to man’s enterprise, on each side of his path, and then slowly raise themselves up again, and re-entangle their branches and conceal his track.

“No,” repeats the explorer of new continents, and overawed exclaims :

“This is the forest primeval. The mourning pines and the hemlocks,
 Bearded with moss and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
 Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic :
 Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.’”

Longfellow.

He sees the weeds of other countries grown up to gigantic forest trees, while he steps from trunk to trunk half buried in slime or moss, as a man steps from cornice to capital amidst the ruins of Halicarnassus and Palmyra. And these are, in truth, the ruins of a more ancient forest.

“No,” finally echoes the wayfarer in the Southern American peninsula, as he reaches the forests of Vera Cruz, and looks up with wonder at the “Royal palm,” with its leafless stem of a hundred feet; the immense fern tree, the beautiful plantain, entangled and bound together by gigantic creepers, resplendent with clustering fruits and floral wonders, proportioned to this luxuriancy of vegetable life; the scarlet vine, the various magnolias and elegant bignonias.

“No,” they all unite in proclaiming, “nature can make a desert, not by barrenness, but by profuseness; not by laying waste, but by over-enriching. She can render thousands of miles impervious to man by the over-abundance of her produce, of fruits, of flowers, of trees, most lovely and magnificent. These wildernesses are her enchanted gardens; her own sheltered pleasures, beyond what romancers ever dreamt of, in which, for thousands of years, all that was beautiful in vegetation has lived and died, without the Power that planted, watered, and gave the increase, caring for man’s eye to witness it.” What a new perception of nature’s beauty has this revelation been!

And what shall we say of the animal life that corresponds to it, there and in India, of whose jungle, for brevity’s sake, I have forborne to speak? Not only birds, whose plumage is bright and rich beyond any human dye; but those aerial tribes of *trochili*, humming-birds, or bee-birds, that look as if they had escaped

from the first paradise, and borne away upon their wings the gold of Havilah, so exceedingly goodly is it. Who that has seen the beautiful collection exhibited by Mr. Gould, has not thought them like flowers on the trees on which they stood, ready to be animated and fly, so gorgeously rich, so fancifully varied, so like the toys of sportive nature?

The poetry of Europe received, no doubt, a powerful infusion of feeling from that of the East. In Asia the love of nature, half cultivated, half wild, was a peculiar sentiment. The Persian "paradise" was a compound apparently of garden and forest, where banquets could be given beneath the trees, or wild beasts hunted by a royal chase. Our ideas of all that is truly romantic and luxurious in the domestication of nature, flowery and fragrant gardens, murmuring fountains, cool streams, and amidst them the poet's tale, the musician's lute, associate themselves in our mind with the days of

"Good Haroun Al Raschid"

and the Caliphs.

Even to this day the gardens of Damascus, its principal ornaments, are not formal orchards or parterres, but wild sylvan masses of forest and fruit trees growing together, with natural brooklets meandering among them, and spots cleared here and there for flowers, where the citizens enjoy their calm meditations, or their social chat.

Hence the poetry of the East has always overflowed with teeming affection for nature, especially for its more graceful forms. The bold allegory which mates its two favourite objects, the nightingale and the rose, symbolised the combination of the elements which I enumerated at the beginning, grace of form, beauty of hue, and fragrance of breath, with sweetness of melody.

Commerce, religious missions, travel, and more than all, the

c

crusades, brought Europe into contact with these feelings; and it is they which changed the character and tone of European poetry from the classical to the romantic.

But the age in which this modification occurred was eminently full of faith; and the eastern element met with another with which it combined, and by which it was ennobled and sanctified.

The admiration of nature in the ancient world had ended in her deification, her study in her worship. The noblest poem in the Latin language, the six books of Lucretius, was written to show that nature has powers sufficient for herself, and that she needs no creator, no preserver, beyond her own innate vigour. With all its beauties, it belongs to that class of human productions, which a wiser than man has simply characterised as those of "the fool," speaking in his heart.

The poets held that the world came before the gods. The bee, Virgil tells us, received new instincts from Jupiter, but it was in reward of services rendered to him in infancy. (3 Georg. 149.)

"Nunc age naturas apibus quas Jupiter ipse
Addidit, expediam, pro qua mercede."

And Ovid makes nature one of two powers engaged jointly in creation.

"Hanc Deus et melior litem Natura diremit."

But Christians had a better creed. For them, Nature could only be the expression, GOD the reality. They had in their hands a volume, beautiful as sacred, in which the whole love of the East for nature's beauties was expressed, but with subordination to a higher love.

So rich are the treasures of the inspired writings, that it takes ages to explore them, ages of loving study and meditation. Eternity will not exhaust them. For a long time, the doctrinal views, if I may so express myself, of that mine continued to supply

endless reward to industrious application. Then, at length, a more affective contemplation arose, and was matured by such men as St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure. This was much at the same period as when the East and Europe met. All the love of nature that was kindled received a holy impression; and the poetry of scripture soon directed the pencil and the lyre. Not Hafiz nor Saadi, when most tender (and then it is with but an earthly, and often a wanton feeling), offer sentiments or beauties, comparable to those which the Old Testament affords. Do not fear that I am going to lead you into the vast and well-trodden field of sacred poetry. I will content myself with what is simply necessary for my subject.

There is scarcely a page in the lyrical or prophetic parts of the inspired volume, which would not afford us specimens of the poetry of nature.

The Canticle of Solomon, for instance, may be said to resemble what I have described the Persian "Paradise" to have been, the combination of the two aspects of nature, the more untutored and the most highly cultivated. When a garden is incidentally described, perhaps the very "enclosed gardens" of Solomon, yet traceable near Bethlehem, it contains fruit-trees and spice-shrubs, mingled with the timber of the forest: "pomegranates and fruits of the orchard; spikenard and saffron, sweet cane and cinnamon, myrrh and aloes, and all the trees of Libanus." And "the fountain of the gardens," is "a well of living waters," not shut up in tanks, nor dribbling in jets, but "running with a strong stream" from the mountain (iv.) There is no part of nature overlooked. It is no pastoral; for the hart and the roe, bounding over the mountains are as familiar to its imagery as the flocks of goats descending from Mount Galaad, or the milk-white sheep coming from the pool. The lily of the field and the fruit of the orchard, the vineyard with its clustering flowers, and the cedars with their noble stems, furnish figures bolder, or pictures more varied, than any profane poetry has done. Nor is this love of nature

confined to the trim garden or cultivated field, but it loves to roam among the wild crags of Sanir and Hermon, amidst "the dens of the lion and the mountains of the leopards."

But if, in this most mysterious of sacred writings, every part of nature is made subservient to a spiritual instruction, the same familiarity with its beauties throws a peculiar charm over the oracles of prophecy. I will confine myself to one or two general observations.

The first is, that images from nature are most frequently selected to describe the social prosperity of the people, or the great moral blessings of a better dispensation. The moon brightens into the splendour of the sun, and the sun expands into seven times his radiance. The wilderness rejoices and flourishes like the lily, buds forth and blossoms, and is crowned with the glory of Libanus and the beauty of Saron and Carmel. (Is. xxxv.) Nay, in bolder imagery, we hear it said—"I will be as the dew; Israel shall spring as the lily, and his root shall shoot forth as that of Libanus." (Osee xiv.)

Hence, too, the anger of the Lord and the visitations of His judgments are clothed in imagery drawn from nature in her fiercer aspect: His glittering spear is seen in the lightning-flash; His horses bounding in the crested waves; His chariot rolling in the thunder-cloud; and the mountains are crushed beneath His heavy tread. (Habac. iii.) And then the vineyard is confounded, and the fig-tree languishes, and the palm and pomegranate are withered. (Joel i.) And when the pressure of the storm abates, all lives again and flourishes; nature smiles, and creation resumes her wonted beauty. Then comes that chain of providential dependences so beautifully described, to express the reconciliation of God and his creatures; when the sower calls to the corn, and wine, and oil to grow, and they entreat the earth for nourishment; and earth supplicates the heavens for their dew, and rain, and sunshine; and these pray to their Lord for the breath that makes all live. And He hears the prayer of the

heavens, and they hear the earth; and the earth hears the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and these hear their husbandman. (Osee ii.)* There appears to me something sublime in this bold *prosopopœia*, of nature linked, through its laws, with God, and every part conscious of its connection. It is like the sap rising from the root to the summit of the plant, by humble aspiration, then returning again, in the form of blessing, through every intermediate stage, till it enriches the root that gave it birth.

It could only be a love of nature's beauty which could thus familiarise the mind with such applications of imagery drawn from it. It implies a sensitiveness unfelt by us, to whom the brightness or gloom of heaven's face would form but a poor symbol of the smile or frown of God.

But I must hurriedly mention another manifestation of this feeling, and it is in the bold application of natural phenomena to persons and even to their attributes. The future Messiah is a flower springing from the family root. But how full of loving fervour is the invocation of the heavens to drop down dew, and the clouds to rain the Just, and the appeal to the earth to bud forth a Saviour, and justice to spring up beside him. (Is. xlv.) Again, He has to descend as rain upon a fleece, and as soft showers gently falling on the earth. (Ps. lxxi.) And once more, justice springs up beside Him; as truth elsewhere takes its place and grows from earth, while justice looks down upon it like the sun from heaven. (lxxxiv.)

Though I have already wandered far into the region into which I promised not to intrude, I wish to detain you one moment longer to exemplify, in a particular instance, the superiority of sacred, over classical, poetry.

* How poor is Shakspeare beside this—

“ And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoners without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth.”

The flash of lightning, followed by its roaring thunder, holds sage and savage in awe. It seems to us, in spite of even science, to come from a higher power than that of our own sphere. It may be called the *ultima ratio*, the last appeal to the unbelieving heart. Horace acknowledged its lesson, and attributes to it his belief in the Deity.* It was, in fact, in the creed of the heathen, the exercise of a might exclusively reserved to the king of the gods. How coarsely is all this handled by profane poetry. Virgil describes the thunderbolts as being forged by the Cyclopes in *Ætna*; rain, clouds, fire, and wind, flash, crash, and fear, are welded together upon the ringing anvils of Vulcan.

“ His informatum manibus, jam parte polita,
Fulmen erat : toto Genitor quæ plurima coelo
Dejicit in terras : pars imperfecta manebat.”

Æneid, viii.

And thus they are made fitting weapons for Jupiter's sinewy arm.

Man can hardly work with his hand, but he destroys. If he makes a wreath, he withers the flower; if he shape an implement he breaks up the tree; if he note down the most brilliant thoughts, he soils the whiteness of the sheet. Only in one way does he approach to the spiritual in his action, and influence nature without disturbing her. When he has spoken, a breath only has passed from him, a breath imponderable, a breath impalpable, but a breath unlimited. The thought, perhaps long the prisoner of his mind, has escaped to the outward world unseen, it has parted from him, taking nothing with it, leaving his being, and substance, and strength unimpaired. It has but touched the outward air, and its message has been carried as though it were borne by a spirit. Yet has it power and might. A word is spoken, and armies rush to storm the fort, with certainty of death. A word is whispered, and it carries life to one doomed to death.

And thus God *acts*. He speaketh, and light is. “ He said

* Odes. i. 34.

and they were made; He commanded and they were created." (Ps. clviii.)

It is with his right hand that Jove clutches his thunderbolt :

" Fulmina molitur dextra :"

then, with terrible frown and awful shaking of his ambrosial locks, he speeds his bolt—not seldom aimless, or, if aimed, effectless.

How different the sublime idea of scripture. The thunder is simply "the voice of God." Familiar as this expression has become to us, we cannot weigh it without feeling its grandeur. No action, no commotion; as calm as the word which creates, is that which blights. A word of the Divine mouth to the barren fig-tree was a lightning flash, that withered it, as much as the magnificent voice on the many waters, which breaketh in pieces the cedars of Libanus. (Ps. xxviii.)

And this voice speaks plainly to man. In the 28th chapter of Job is the history of the search after wisdom. First, the industry of man is detailed in digging for the treasures of earth, silver, gold, and precious stones. *These* are found; but where is wisdom to be sought? No treasures, such as have cost so much pains, can purchase it: no search on earth or in heaven can discover it. God alone keeps it, and can communicate it. His voice speaketh, and announces to man the truth which it sends through his heart: "The fear of the Lord is wisdom."

Such noble and sublime views easily caught the soul of art. God seen in nature, became the obvious perception of its greatest beauty. St. Francis of Assisi, the model of mortification, poverty, and penance, is the very type of this feeling. He had a most sweet and gentle, yet most spiritualized, love of nature. He loved its flowers, he loved its verdure, he loved its birds, with a tenderness almost maternal. In that book, which bears so characteristic a name, his *Fioretti*, or "little flowers," is a beautiful narrative of

his meeting a youth who was taking to market a number of turtle doves, and of his begging them from him, "because he had a particular affection for such gentle creatures;" and "he looked upon them with a glance full of tender compassion;" and addressed them affectionately, calling them "Turtle doves, my dear little sisters, simple, innocent, and chaste."

And, as a poet, his verses are full of love and tenderest affection.

In another form, too, did this love of nature entwine itself round religion. The whole Flora of the middle ages was devotional; scarcely was there a saint in the calendar, who had not his flower assigned him. But before her, who was type of all that is pure and beautiful, so great was the profusion of flowery tribute laid, that in her even the ordinary appurtenances of the person, down to every ornament and garment, was symbolized by flowers.* Hence the idea that May, as the most beautiful of months, is naturally connected with her, is not modern, but dates, at least, from that period; for old Chaucer sings:—

"Those saw thy child yslain before thin eyen,
And yet now liveth my litel child parfar:
Now, lady bright, to whom all woful crien,
Thou glory of womanhed, thou faire May,
Thou haven of refute, bright sterre of day,
Rew on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Rewest on every rewful in distresse.

The Man of Lawe's Tale.

Nor could the modern poet of nature and nature's soul be blind to that connection between the beautiful in nature, its virgin snows, as well its blooming flowers, and her who is pure as those and fair as these. I will, however, quote but a few lines from Wordsworth:—

"And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow,

* The word "lady," in the name of a plant or insect, connects it with "Our ladie."

Not only from the dreary strife
Of winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy votaries aptly styled
Our Lady of the Snow.

Even for the man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady, flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs,
A holy shadow soft and dear,
Of chastening sympathies !"

Our Lady of the Snow.

The author, however, of all others who, to my mind, has reached the highest perception of nature's beauties, and who belongs to that early period, is he whom I can never, in spite of much to be deplored in him, approach except with reverence, Dante Alighieri. He indulges in no long descriptions. His chain of verse works on, link after link ; each ring, burnished plain, or richly embossed, or deftly enamelled, is knitted to its fellows, not to be torn out without unravelling the entire band. But in any one may be set a gem, occupying the space of a few syllables, which reflects the hues and lights of nature, softened to the most delicate tints. Yet is not this, I think, his chiefest glory. He is the only poet who has been able to seize on the more evanescent points of nature's beauties, light and sound ; and so to spiritualize them still more, as to make one feel that in them heaven may have something of earth, and be not degraded, nor materialized. Light in every sweet variety ; not to speak of sparks of fire, vivid flames, lightning flashes, and eccentric wheels of light moving together ; but the eye-like gaze of the solitary star, the softest gleaming of an Italian dawn, the oppressive majesty of a southern noon, the golden radiance of an autumnal evening, are in his descriptions, not successive stages or marks of mundane times, but states and conditions of ethereal existences, circumstances and accidents of words, and actions, and movements of celestial beings.

And so with sounds : from the thunder or the cataract to the

softest breathings of the lute, or the harping of unseen chords, he gathers a concert of bliss in universal harmony, which forms that wonderful lyre, described by him, whose strings extend across, and round, and through creation ; vibrating ever beneath the touch of Almighty and Universal Goodness.*

So, by the time that we approach his closing pages, do these two most impalpable elements of natural beauty blend together, that the fading light of day seems to melt away as a musical cadence, and the bursting chorus of angelic voices expands like the light of the unveiled sun.† And then the very breast feels inflated, and the earthly burthen lightened, and the spirit more spiritualized, as one is borne along buoyantly upon the two wings—the golden one of light, and the silver one of sound—from rose to rose, and from star to star, the sweet and brilliant abodes of saintliness, till one exclaims with him who bears us :—

"To Father and to Son and Holy Spirit
Rose such a "Gloria," through all Paradise,
That the sweet *song* inebriated me.
What *I beheld* appeared to me the smile
Of universal life ; such the entrancing bliss,
That through the ear and eye poured into me."

Paradiso, Canto xxvii.

In the art of that period, so eminently Christian, we discover the same union between love of nature and deep religious spirit. Who can fail to see, that in the beautiful religious paintings of early art, the subordinate parts, foreground and background, are finished, as the Italians say, *con amore*, that is, with the love of what they represent. Every portion of the former is filled up with flowers, often elaborately detailed. And, I must say, I love those evidently well-loved back grounds, where the clearest azure softens and melts into the brightest of sunset-tints ; where trees,

* Parad. xv. 6.

† Mozart has done something like this in describing, by sounds, the creation of light.

pencilled as delicately as those sketched by the icy breath of winter, when it meets on the glass the warm breathing of a child, run into, and brocade, the golden veil of evening, fringed by the purple crags, castles, and belfries that jag the sharp horizon. I remember once approaching Rome by the Portuensian gate, just as day was declining, with one who loved more modern schools; and, in friendly discussion, he denied that in nature such marked outlines were to be found; when I merely pointed towards the Janiculum, where the tower and other buildings of St. Pietro in Montorio, with trees and shrubs were projected, in sharp outline, upon the evening cloudless sky, with its bright amber passing through, and defining clearly, the opening of the belfry; and he at once acknowledged, that this was precisely what Pietro Perugino painted. So necessarily allied to truth must all real love be.

If I had to select a symbol of this feeling in art, I think it would be one of Francesco Francia's paintings in the Munich gallery. In front of one of those light and elegant landscapes lies an infant on the ground, alone, laid upon a small carpet and cushion, round which the flowers curl their slender stems. His countenance beams with sweet intelligence, and his hand plays unconsciously with an orb. The ground around him is completely enamelled with variegated flowers, and what separates him from the country round, is only a trellis of blooming roses. Nature in her beauty alone surrounds him, supports, adorns him. One only representative of humanity is nigh; and as she,

“Our tainted nature's solitary boast,”

its purest flower, leans over him, kneeling with hands crossed upon her bosom, in an attitude, half of adoration, half of maternal love, she appears to me not an unfit symbol of that loving homage which from natural love rises to the supernatural, from the affections of nature raise us to the adoration of nature's God.

Do these lesser things among her many rich gifts appear too

mean to be singled out as aptest objects for admiration and love, and, therefore, for symbols of the higher lessons which nature teaches? If the stars be nature's gems, fixed in sparkling brilliancy for ever in her crown, are not flowers but her "gaudes," which she casts off and changes for new fashions every month, and spurns under her feet? And can these suggest to us nobler thoughts than those?

As I have illustrated the moral perception of nature in her most awful form from the Old Testament, we must seek the lesson how to contemplate and appreciate her softer beauties, from the love-lit pages of the New.

A right royal scene is opened before us. The Queen of the South is come to see the marvels, and hear the wisdom of Solomon, both the topics of Asiatic fame. She has gone with wonder through his palace, and surveyed its grandeur and order, "the meat of his table, and the apartments of his servants, and the order of his ministers, and their apparel and cupbearers."—(II. Reg. ix. 5.) But now she stands before him in solemn court, where everything that can dazzle and astonish is concentrated. Twelve smaller lions of gold form the avenue to the throne, itself of "elephant and gold," of such workmanship that "there was never any such work done in any kingdom," and supported by larger golden lions. His very guards bear two hundred shields of purest gold, and all the furniture around is of the same precious metal—for silver is of no account there. How magnificently arrayed then must be his princes, his generals, and his many ministers, the envoys of his tributaries, and the ambassadors of Hiram the gold-merchant King? Then let us imagine to what a pitch of oriental sumptuousness is the king of Israel's own person decked. How have multitudes toiled for the splendour of his array! The caves of India and Ethiopia have been explored by patient miners, who have plucked from the rock the emerald and the diamond, and skilful workmen have ground and polished them till they dazzle by their blaze. The divers of Persia have explored

the depths of ocean, to bring thence pearls of matchless dimensions and perfect shapes. Then a whole fleet has made a three years' voyage to Ophir, and bought and carried home the gold which hundreds have been engaged in picking, and smelting, and refining. Now begins the work of artists, domestic and foreign. The looms of Damascus furnish the richest textures, the purple which the Tyrian fisherman has brought up from the sea is applied perhaps by the double-dyers (*δύβαφεις*) of Thyatira; the embroiderers of Sidon, Babylon, or Phrygia have covered the mantle with variegated "needle-paintings," as they were gracefully called. The jewellers and goldsmiths of Jerusalem have vied with one another, in producing the most perfect work out of the most lavish materials; the anvil and the hammer, the graver and every delicate instrument for chasing, and inlaying, and setting, have been at work for weeks; till, from the crown and the armlets, to the girdle and the very sandals, all is royal, exquisite, in its magnificence. And Arabia and Saba have sent their most fragrant spices, to shed around the throne an atmosphere of fragrance.

So may we imagine King Solomon, as Assuerus is described to us, when "he sat on his royal throne, clothed with his royal robes, and glittering with precious stones," but not like him "terrible to behold." * For his countenance is noble, and his eyes full of the inspiration of wisdom; and his parted lips are uttering sentences to the Queen, worthy of everlasting record; and she is exclaiming in heart, "Blessed are thy servants, who stand before thy face all day and hear thy wisdom."

Now, at this moment, when his heart is the most full, and his soul the most expanded, and when he is, and feels himself to be, the King in all outward and in all moral greatness, let us imagine a little angel-child to enter into the midst of this splendid assemblage, holding in his hand but one simple lily of the field, plucked by anticipation from some cottage-garden in Nazareth, or from the purlieu of Bethlehem, and stretching it forth, say, "O great

* Esther xv. 9.

King Solomon, now in all thy glory, thou art not arrayed even as this little flower ! ”

And that Monarch, who had discoursed of every plant, from the cedar of Libanus to the hyssop creeping on the wall, must have bowed his head in reverent assent, and might be well supposed to have answered, “ Thou sayest truly, O mysterious child ; and thou hast, moreover, spoken more wisdom in those few words than I have uttered this day. For my sentences have been but the emanations of human knowledge, but thy words have been those of a God.”

What a wonderful pre-eminence is here given to the lowliest work of God over the most splendid works of man ! What an idea of the perfection which exists in the one, in its soft and tender texture, in the brilliancy of its colour, in the elegance of its form, in the delicacy of its organization, yea, in the very life which gives it elasticity, sweetness, and healthiness, compared with the lumpish, unchanging, dead, splendour of metal and jewel. And yet the poet who calls it

“ The lily, lady of the flowering field,”

(as Pliny calls it “ the queen of flowers”), which

“ Yet neither spins nor cards, ne cares nor frets,

But to her mother Nature all her cares she lets,”

(*Spenser.*)

has destroyed the whole beauty of the sentiment. For ladies and queens are pompously clothed without this manual labour. No ; the charm of the thought lies in this—that God so “ clothes the very grass of the field ” (for in Palestine it is such), “ which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven ;” that day and night the wondrous loom of nature, who is but God’s handmaid, is weaving over the whole earth, mountain, vale, meadow, and desert, a veil of exquisite texture, variegated to infinity in pattern and colour, in spite of scythe and plough, drought and flood, from which you cannot pick an ornament—a snowdrop as well as a tulip—that can be matched by the complicated efforts of man’s skill. What

a new perception is here of natural beauty, hidden from the classic mind!

And yet, perhaps, we have not descended low enough in the scale of nature's beauties to exhaust the advantages in perception which we possess over the ancients. There is one sacred book to which I have scarcely ventured to refer, for it would have itself sufficed for a lecture, in connexion with my theme. The book of Job contains not only many magnificent passages, but a sublime close, in which the Divine Creator himself selects for man's admiration some of His mightiest works. The elements of creation are first wonderfully enumerated; the spreading forth of light, and knitting together the stars into constellations; the path of the lightning, the storehouses of the snow, and the treasures of hail; the cloud-robed sea, hemmed in with bars and gates; the firm earth built on its measured foundation, and its cornerstone laid by its eternal Architect, to the choral song of the morning stars, and the joyful melody of the sons of God. (Job xxxviii.)

Then come the wonders of animated existence, all such as took natural hold on the dweller near the desert. The fleet roe that bounded before the hunter on the mountains, vaulting from crag to crag, and the wild ass that flouted his yoke, and distanced him scornfully on the plain; the ostrich that sailed with outstretched pinions across the sand, and the snorting steed, already subdued to man, that chased it in vain; and the birds of prey that soar over "the cragged flints" on which, beyond the reach of man's assaults, they nestle their young. Then follow the two full and minute descriptions of the huge monsters of land and water, as "the beginning of the ways of God."

It is a voice from a whirlwind, which selects these themes of terror as of wonder. The might of God, as manifested in works of huge bulk and massive parts, as well as in those of wild beauty and indomitable freedom, was thus aptly brought home to the mind of children of the vast deserts and rocky fastnesses of Edom. Rude, unscholared, artless, more to be gained to admiration by

prowess than by refinement, rather to be won to reverence by strength, than by delicacy, of treatment; the grandeur of creative power was best measured to them, by the "bones like pipes of brass, and the gristle like plates of iron" of behemoth, and the "scales like molten shields" of leviathan. (xl. xli.)

But with us it is not so. Science has caught its complexion from the law of love, under which it has been matured; we are to be won by the least of things to greater admiration than they could be by the greatest. Not presuming to introduce the same Omniscient Instructor as addressing us, they who in His name vindicate His undervalued glory, might venture to give this lesson.

"Look not," they might say, "at the plumage of the ostrich, its silken texture, its graceful wave. All this is coarse compared with the beautiful plume of the tiny gnat. See it in the microscope magnified to the dimensions of that plucked from the giant bird, no less perfect in its construction and its elegance.

"It is wonderful to contemplate the very rivers of blood that course through the elephant's unwieldy frame; far more marvelous it is to see, in the threads of veins in the smallest animal, the globules roll of their little stream of life, through canals as well constructed, and as safely coated, as in the colossal animal.

"What a sure and powerful hand it required to model that immense organization in its right proportions, to give it just heart enough to contain the exact supply of blood, a reservoir in perfect ratio to its conduits; digestive apparatus commensurate with the exigences of the enormous mass to be maintained; framework of form and solidity equal to the weight to be supported, nay, moved with speed and cumbrous agility; muscular strength enough to give it action. Then, on the other hand, what a delicate and dainty touch did it require to fit up the almost invisible animalcules, with senses, dimensions, organs as perfect in adaptation, as those of the largest animate being, so that we may see them strange, fantastic, monstrous, and dilated, under the artificial eye of science, to the size of giants, till the very functions of life can be seen within their

transparent skins. It is truly making the organisation of the behemoth pass through the eye of a needle."

Which power appears to you the more wonderful? You dare not decide, and you need not. The wonder is that the two are in one. You admire the finished and polished mechanism of the engine that glides by you on the rail; its iron joints moving so pliantly and smoothly under the influence of its hissing and panting breath. You admire no less the minute and delicate construction of the watch, which, scarcely larger than a hazel-nut, contains a complication of wheels, springs, and other mechanical contrivances, so nicely adjusted, that all the parts move harmoniously, and true as the sun, whose course it marks. Each is beautiful and perfect. But you would scarcely expect the brawny hands that forged and rivetted together the steel bars and iron plates of the one, to cut out, adapt, and combine the delicate works of the other. They are as the behemoth and the animalcule of human ingenuity.

Yet it was one Hand that fashioned both these in creation, and gave them life and spontaneous motion, and perpetuity of kind; restorative powers and preservative resources; senses that converse with outward things, and instincts that form a semblance of mental actions. This gives us, within compass easily comprehended, a measure of the universal wisdom, and of the unbounded power which concur in creation. We measure men's power by the greatness of what it can do; we may as easily estimate God's by the least, as by the greatest, that it condescends to perform. Had the Almighty created but one grain of sand, this would alone have sufficed to prove His omnipotence.

But He was pleased to do more than this, to make all nature the mirror of Himself. It was dashed to the ground when sin came in, as the stone tablets were by Moses, and broken into a thousand pieces. No longer does it show the whole grandeur of the Divine countenance smiling serenely upon the work which its lips had pronounced good. No longer does it reflect with equal

brightness the hues of heaven ; but, soiled and clouded, it gives imperfect lights, and even sometimes a false colour. Patient and loving thought, assisted by science, may join many at least of these fragments together, and enable us somewhat to enlarge the field of our contemplation. The more we study nature, with gentle hearts and child-like affection, the more we shall see in her this image of her Maker. And if we have not skill to unite under our eye many portions of this shattered glass, let even the smallest portion on which we look be ever so turned and directed, as to give us at least a partial glimpse of that everlasting Beauty, which brightens with glory, or adorns with grace, whatever, like dust in the sunbeam, basks in its loving ray.

“ Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe !
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion ! Not in vain,
By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul ;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,—
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.”

Wordsworth.

ROME, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

LECTURE II.

IF, at the beginning of a lecture, it is usual to give some reason for the subject selected, unless circumstances sufficiently obvious have suggested it, I am fortunately exempted from this conventional obligation. For the subject on which I am about to address you is not the result of choice, but has been proposed, or rather assigned to me.* My duty, therefore, is simply to treat it to the best of my ability, and draw from it instruction rather than mere recreation.

The title, "Rome, Ancient and Modern," gives, indeed, ample scope to historical disquisition, and abundant range to the imagination. Rome, classical, but heathen, on the one hand, Rome, artistic and Christian, on the other, stand powerfully contrasted before us. The one is warlike, factious, fiery, and full of indomitable purpose, the boiling vortex, which itself agitated and restless, pushes waves of irresistible conquest to every shore; the other,

* It was announced, under a somewhat different form, in the list of lectures of the "Islington Popular Club," without any name; and it was only later that I was requested to undertake it.

calmly intrepid, exercising a pacific spiritual rule over a still wider religious empire.

“ Quidquid non possidet armis
Religione tenet.”

The first is the Rome of Cicero, of Virgil, and of Livy, leaving to all Europe an inheritance of taste, and a law of language, of which every civilized nation has accepted the one, and obeys the other; the second is, the Rome of Raffaele and of Michelangelo, even now preserving for the world the models, and dictating thence the canons, of artistic beauty and grandeur.

And still, as though to vindicate her title of “ eternal,” she seems to have no distinction of past and present. Ancient Rome lives yet in modern Rome, so as to appear indestructible; and modern Rome is so interlaced with ancient Rome, as justly to seem primeval. They resemble two noble figures placed side by side, with the one form of old Tiber, crowned with sedges and pouring out his urn, at their feet; the one clothed in panoply and seated on the fragments of her ruined temples, pensive and repentant; the other standing over her, mild and majestic, and warding off from her broken treasures the jealous stroke of time. The marble halls of the Vatican have offered an asylum to the choicest remains of heathen art, and the Capitol bears on its summit the symbol of the Christian’s triumph. It would be difficult, therefore, to treat of Rome otherwise than as one.

It is this fact which constitutes the singularity of Rome, and at the same time gives us a key to what we may call its destiny. It will form the subject of my lecture: for thus only, it seems to me, that I can be faithful to my theme, the bringing of old and new Rome into combination, and exhibiting their reciprocal influences.

I do not know how I can better illustrate the transmutation of the one into the other, than by recalling to your minds the beautiful contrivance of dissolving views.

We have first before us a distinct and rich picture of the ancient city. The descriptions of some contemporary writers, the casual references of others, the inscriptions discovered in various places, medals on which the edifices are often engraved, and, above all, their ruins themselves, enable the antiquarian and the architect to represent it to us in its integrity, its magnificence, and its splendour. Soon the whole scene is transformed. On the same field stands projected a view of scarcely less grandeur, and in many parts of scarcely altered lines; basilicas stand where basilicas stood before; temples often where temples were. But domes rise on domes, and tower stretches beyond tower, here amidst lofty palaces, there among clustering vines and graceful cypresses, or side by side with striding aqueducts, or massive baths. Yet distinct as each picture is, the transition from one to the other, the melting of the old into the new has been a mystery, which the eye could not pursue. The first slowly faded as the lines of the second struggled through it, they were mingled in confusion for a time, each was indiscernible, inseparable; the field of vision was never for a moment empty, yet you could not tell which, or what occupied it; until at last the lines unravelled themselves, the second outline disengaged itself, gave a new aspect and colour to the portions preserved of the primitive representation; while all that was new came out bold, original, and independent.

In some such sort did the transformation of ancient into later Rome take place. A noble and beautiful modern city stands where once stood a greater and richer one; how the change was effected, I cannot pretend to describe. But this is evident, that the fact is exceptional in the history of nations.

The banks of the Nile are strewed with the ruins of massive Memnonia, and the torn limbs of gigantic sphynxes; but they stand solitary upon the marshy banks, stripped of the cities that surrounded them. Green mounds till lately marked, on the barren plains of Assyria, the palaces and temples of proud Nineveh and luxurious Babylon; their colossal sculptures have been drawn

up from under the present ground, worthy indeed to be considered the school or the harbingers of Grecian art, but fruitless in their own soil, without succession of themselves, or of the race that produced them. Nay, the graceful columns of the Acropolis still stand ; while at their feet lay for ages, only poor and homely edifices, that could claim but little kindred with the monuments of the fairest of ancient cities.

But if neither greatness of empire, solidity of construction, nor beauty of work could save from hopeless destruction the capitals of other countries, we may well be surprised, after reading the history of Rome, how her lot should have been different. To the time of Constantine the city was still receiving additions ; Dioclesian had built baths of immense dimensions, which proved that the eye of the Romans, if not capable of refined perceptions, was still able to appreciate grand proportions ; and Constantine had erected his triumphal arch and his basilica near, or in, the forum. But the translation of the empire to Byzantium shortly altered this state of things. By degrees Rome was neglected, and soon almost abandoned. After the bright, but transient prosperity of the Theodosian period, calamity and violence fell upon her. The expense of keeping in repair the enormous piles of public edifices, many now become useless, and even hateful, was too great for the resources of a city no longer first in the empire ; time began to shake and wear the less solid buildings ; earthquakes shattered or rent to their foundations the most massive ; and conflagrations wrecked and ravaged, without distinction, the noble and the mean.

And now came what was worse than either, the shock of invasion and the barbarian's torch. The successive torrents that streamed forth from the frozen north, rolled on towards the plains of Italy as naturally as the river runs towards the sea ; and once in Italy as naturally converged towards the imperial and sacerdotal city. In the year 404 Alaric, at the head of his Visigoths, took and sacked Rome, stripping it of everything valuable in the eyes of barbarians.

About six years later, another similar outrage took place. In 455, the Vandals, under Genseric, landed at the mouth of the Tiber. Three years before, the invasion of Attila, "the scourge of God," had been staved off, and Rome had been saved, not by the valour of the imperial generals, but by the intrepid interposition of the great St. Leo; and now, a second time, this fearless Pontiff went forth as mediator for his flock, to propitiate the northern conqueror. He so far succeeded as to dissuade Genseric from burning down the entire city, as he had intended, and thus consummating its ruin. But short of this, for fourteen days and nights, it was given up to the unbridled fury, cupidity, and licence of his unsparing troops.

Again, in 472, Ricimer and his barbarian Goths took and sacked the devoted city. But all the horrors of former invasions were forgotten beside that of Totila and the Ostragoths, in 546. In his fury this victorious chief, who had vanquished eleven imperial generals, decreed that Rome, after being completely pillaged, should become "a pasture for cattle."

When a divine oracle went forth against mighty Tyre, the first-born daughter of the sea, that it should be a "drying place for nets" (Ezech. xxvi. 5, 14), it was fulfilled at once, to the letter and for ever. But when man, however strong and however daring, with all human probabilities on his side, presumes to make similar decrees, he may find it is collision with a higher ordinance that cannot be baffled. Totila sentenced Rome to be a feeding-place for cattle; but an irreversible decree had been long before issued, that it should be the eternal pasture, where the Chief Shepherd should feed the flock of Christ.

Strange to say, the barbarian, as if obeying a destiny which forbade the destruction of that immortal city, listened to the remonstrance of the general whom he had conquered in battle. Belisarius threatened him with perpetual infamy if he destroyed what remained of Roman grandeur; and he refrained from executing his intentions. But he carried away the whole senate,

and most of the inhabitants into Apulia, and Rome remained empty for forty days, as it has been described, "a marble wilderness." *

We may well wonder what these successive invaders and plunderers found to carry off; and we can hardly describe their ravages better than in the language of the prophet:† "That which the palmer-worm hath left the locust hath eaten; and that which the locust hath left the bruchus hath eaten; and that which the bruchus hath left the mildew hath destroyed." One only solution history supplies; that not less industrious, ingenious, and persevering than the ant, the inhabitants, headed by their Pontiffs, as soon as the bitter waters of invasion had subsided, recommenced the work of effacing, so far as possible, the traces of desolation, where most their affections prompted them.

The old basilicas were speedily restored, and, strange to say, new ones built. Rich mosaics adorned their walls, and gold plate and rich vestments reappeared upon, and around, their altars, to be again plundered and again replaced. But even this all tended to the destruction of ancient Rome. Too poor in money, in art, and in skill, to procure and prepare new materials, the labourers found these at hand in the older edifices. Columns were freely taken from tottering porticoes, or dilapidated temples, and adapted to, or incorporated in, newer erections. Fragments of cornices long thrown down, inscriptions torn by hostile or by natural convulsions from their places, were built into the walls, mingled with tiles and bricks of every age and appearance, forming what antiquarians call the "opus tumultuarium," which we may translate familiarly by "pell-mell work."

Another singular cause of destruction was at work, and has left everywhere traces of its action. This was poverty. Almost every great building retains the marks of having been adapted for dwellings. Holes were made into the walls, and rafters intro-

* See Mr. Bridge's excellent "Popular Modern History," p. 28.

† Joel i. 4.

duced to make a roof, probably by the thousands who remained unsheltered after a sack or conflagration. But further, such was the dearth of metals, that either they or their invaders pierced the huge stones of massive edifices, to extract the copper cramps that bound them, and thus not only disfigured, but enfeebled those noble works.

What the effects of all these ruinous operations have been upon modern Rome, and what are the considerations to be drawn from them, we shall see later. At present let me pause for a moment, and ask you to reflect upon the condition of the inhabitants left to this afflicted and humbled city, during the period which I have described. What survived to attach them to the heap of ruins, that represented to them ancient Rome? According to the plan in all great cities, the public buildings and more solid structures rose about the Forum, and these remained; but the inhabited parts, the seven hills, and the Campus Martius, must have been by this time a mere mass of roofless, and often crumbled, walls. Their few occupiers must have dwelt in the midst of perpetual alarm; often in the night the crash of some falling arch must have shaken their frail tenements to their foundations; while during the day they must have crept, in fear, along the blocked up streets, beneath the overhanging threatenings of shattered edifices, or through the openings of their gaping fissures. The broken aqueducts must now have poured out their ungoverned waters into marshy pools, instead of healthy reservoirs, till they became choked up, and their sources lost. The very river, encumbered by monuments that had tumbled into its bed, by bridges washed down because unrepaired, and even by materials wantonly thrown in for destruction, seems to have changed its bed, unrecorded in the silence of history.

Should we have been surprised, if we had read of Rome, what we see to have been the consequence of much less utter havoc and desolation; that as to Thebes succeeded Cairo, to Babylon Bagdad, as even Jerusalem changed its site after its own final

overthrow, so the natives of Rome, worn out by such successive calamities, and almost sick of their early attachment, had migrated to a healthier, safer, and pleasanter spot; and raised a new Rome on some of the beautiful hills which surround the unwholesome spot that Romulus had chosen?

Tusculum, when destroyed, descended from its crags to the sweet acclivity of the hills, and buried itself in their green foliage; Alba, devastated, crossed its lake, and chose a new site, from which it could still look into that calm mirror, yet range across the plains to the very sea. What, I ask again, more natural, than that Rome should have obeyed this almost universal law?

Reasons there must have been: reasons operative and definite in the minds of those who rejected the pleadings of such natural instincts; reasons deeper still in the designs of that Providence, without which not only a sparrow does not fall, but which even weighed the lives of the "many beasts," as well as of the 120,000 persons who did not know their right hand from their left, when it decided that Nineveh should *not* be destroyed.*

Ages of turbulence and confusion succeeded to those of invasion and pillage. Powerful families contended among themselves for feudal dominion, or for sovereign power. Each oppressed, plundered, destroyed in its turn: often altogether in alliance, or in contest. They erected fortresses within the city, or in its immediate vicinity, or among the neighbouring villages and towns. And here again the old city was destroyed, for the erection of these and other buildings. Indeed we may say, that even till after the revival of art, this form of plundering continued. At length, just as art and good letters were dawning, while Dante and Petrarca were singing, Giotto painting, many splendid cathedrals being built, the great conservative power of Rome was removed, its very light apparently extinguished. In 1308, the Pope removed his court, but not his see, to Avignon. During this partial eclipse, Rome was truly dark and desolate, and it must have been indeed

* Jonas iv. 11.

a powerful spell which still attached its inhabitants to it, and, we may justly add, attracted the pilgrim to its ruins.

Let us now consider the action of the various causes which we have seen at work, in the production of the modern city. One peculiarity must, I think, strike a superficial observer. During the time that northern Europe, and even northern Italy was creating its architecture, Rome was in a state of deepest dejection. It had indeed no want of what other countries so much needed. It still possessed large, and for the age, splendid churches. They had their laws, their arrangements, their very ornaments either perpetuated, or according to tradition renewed from earliest times. It was not a period for wantonly throwing down what existed, and beginning afresh. Consequently mediæval art made comparatively less entrance into Rome, than into any other city. Indeed, Rome may seem to be almost the barrier at which it stopped. Florence and Bologna accepted it, and nearer still Assisi and Orvieto; but with a single exception, that of the church of the Minerva, no edifice of any magnitude records in Rome the period of pointed architecture.

What was the consequence? First, that later there was no temptation to destroy what existed, so long as it would stand. Some of the basilicas were indeed, at a subsequent period, materially modified, though their ground plan was kept; but it was generally a matter of necessity to preserve the buildings from ruin. And further, when at last the arts revived, and Rome resumed her pre-eminence in them, she had her own models to recur to; and she surely cannot be blamed, if, having passed through the mediæval period of architecture without adopting it, she did not return to it, when already everywhere else it had passed its perfection, and was verging towards decay.

This being the case, we must naturally desire, that as much as possible of the ancient city should have remained, to embellish the modern, and to instruct the world in art. If the ancient Romans had not transferred to their own capital many of the treasures of Greece, there is no doubt but they would have been lost to us. Excepting the

Elgin marbles, which, after all, have come to us with some imputation of Vandalism, how little has that fertile soil of art yielded to us of direct profit? We may therefore be thankful that Rome was constituted a treasury to which all the world contributed; and that its stores were so immense, that after the wholesale destruction of ages so much should still survive. But it will perhaps appear a paradox, when I further assert, that the very causes of destruction which I have enumerated, have proved, in the hands of Providence, the means of preservation.

In fact, nothing is more thoroughly destructive than want of appreciation of what is possessed. A gold medal has better chance of doing good to archæology and art by having been buried, than by having fallen into the hands of a Bedouin or a Tartar. Either would melt it for its value, or pierce it for an ornament. It is mother earth that, gradually releasing the numerous treasures in her custody, fills our cabinets with gems, with coins, and with antique jewellery. And so, if there was a wise and mysterious dispensation, that the days of ancient and modern civilisation should be separated by a night of gloom, and if that Eye, which saw equally in both, saw that both were good, the best hope for the second was in the concealment of the first.

Then, as the first agent of that provident power came destruction, merciful as the spade or mattock which dashes the clod upon the seed, and conceals it from the bird that would have consumed it, till its time of new life has come. If the vaults of the Golden House had not been filled up with earth, Raffaele would not have found, in freshness of colour and distinctness of outline, the arabesques which he transferred to the Vatican, as accessories to his splendid frescoes. If the tombs of the Scipios, or the freedmen of Augustus, or the Nasones, and many others, had not been themselves buried with their dead, we should not have possessed the interesting inscriptions and paintings which they yet exhibit, nor the accurate information which they convey to our very eyes, of the sepulchral rites and funereal honours of the ancients. Still

more, had not the tomb at **Monte Granaro**, out of the Lateran gate, been changed into a hill and covered with a vineyard, and surmounted by a tower, the matchless Portland vase, instead of being the gem of the British Museum, might have been carried on the head of some mediæval peasant, as a piece of domestic crockery, to the well, and some day dashed to pieces by a stumble against a block of porphyry, and swept into the ash-pit. And so may we speak of the numberless Etruscan vases, or alabaster sarcophagi, which subterranean Cæræ, Volterra, Chuisi, or Nola have yielded up, to enrich the museums of all Europe.

And what shall we say of sculpture? Who can estimate what perished of most exquisite art during the middle ages? Of the statues and groups mentioned by Pliny, how many are lost? Are they destroyed, or do they remain still buried, destined to reward the toil, and to rejoice the hearts, of a future generation? No one knows, but all must wish for the second alternative. Undoubtedly during a long period, marble was the most handy material for making lime; and we may doubt whether a mediæval lime-burner would have discriminated much between the Laocoon or Apollo, and some rude garden satyr, unless the latter weighed more, or seemed of a finer grain. Among the statues not long ago dug up by Signor Guidi, the most ingenious, indefatigable, and disinterested of Roman excavators, were two of beautiful execution and grand proportions, which were split in two, by strokes of a sledge hammer found beside them; whether from spite or wantonness, or from more utilitarian motives, it is impossible to say. But this is certain, that, while whatever remained uncovered, unless in some way protected, disappeared; all that we possess of great value, has been recovered from ruins.

Nor, after all, is this scanty in extent or in value. Not only the three museums of Rome, and its private collections, are full of masterpieces of glyptic art, but if you go to Naples, or to Florence, you find the gems of both museums to have been carried away from Rome, whose abundance has likewise contributed plentifully to even more distant collections.

However, therefore, we may deplore the ravages and spoliations, the conflagrations and destructions of barbarous invaders, we have reason to feel indebted to these calamities, as some of the means by which a great deal has been preserved to us, which we highly prize. And, in like manner, were other destructive agencies over-ruled. If columns, and capitals, and friezes were torn from profane buildings, and transferred to sacred ones, these beautiful specimens of eastern marbles would probably have fallen, with many others, and have perished. Porphyry urns now under altars would possibly have been cut up to make tessellated pavements, or to clothe twisted columns, and the matchless Phrygian pillars that supported the Ostian basilica of St. Paul, would have been doubtless calcined by a much earlier conflagration than destroyed them in 1823. Many valuable inscriptions too, which now adorn museums, owe their preservation to their having been encrusted, as building material in a wall.

In like manner, one cannot fail to observe, how, unintentionally, the rude barons of the middle ages have preserved for us, what might otherwise have irrecoverably perished. The Orsini seized on the theatre of Marcellus, used its outward wall as that of their palace, strengthened it, without hurting its lines, by building up the arches, and have saved it. The Gaetani made the circular tomb of Cœcilia Metella the kernel or keep of their castle on the Appian way, built to levy exactions from travellers, but causing the abandonment, and probably the preservation, of the monuments on that famous road. Scarcely any other tomb, in consequence, is so well preserved. Finally, the Frangipani chose the triumphal arch of Titus as their stronghold in the Forum, castellated it, and surrounded it with works, which probably held it together. For when first I saw Rome, this most important monument was shored up, and supported by scaffolding within, until Pius VII. had it perfectly restored.

We have now seen through what terrible vicissitudes, and in what marvellous ways the ancient Rome was preserved from total destruction, and made to influence the new. Let us now reverse

the picture, and consider, what, at first sight may appear strange, in what manner again, in our times, the old city developes from the new, emerging from it, and seeming to be born again, under the care of its loving daughter.

It is a source of untiring interest in Rome, to follow the fresh discoveries made in antiquarian pursuits. These take such a variety of form, and give such unexpected results, as often to delight and astonish. The two cities may be compared to a palimpsest manuscript; that is, one which having been written over in classical times, has had its lines in part effaced, and written over again, with a later and sometimes valuable work. The practised eye of a scholar, like the late Cardinal Mai, detects the original tracing, without destroying its superincumbent, and usurping successor, and with little artificial help; and thus an old author is rescued from total loss or oblivion. And so it happens in Rome. In excavating the foundation of a house, in hollowing out a sewer, you may come to an old wall, which almost defies the pick; the ready antiquarian easily decides its age; it gives him a clue to the site of a lost edifice; the neighbouring cellars are searched, continuations of the work discovered, perhaps a base or capital that clearly belonged to it; and thus the ancient classical city is read beneath churches and palaces, like a book of Cicero under the text of a schoolman. In this manner can the plan and proportions of the *Septa Julia* be traced among the subterraneans and foundations of a variety of buildings, in and near the Corso.

At another time, accident or design leads to the discovery of new regions, not only unexplored, but unknown. A most interesting example has just occurred. On the Aventine stands the venerable old church of Santa Sabina, with a house attached to it, occupied by a community of Dominicans, ever since the time of their founder. About three months ago, these good religious wished to make an alteration in their garden, and reduce it more into the English style. They were, of course, their own workmen, and it was not long before their industry was amply repaid.

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They met with an opening into which they entered, and found an ancient Christian hall elegantly painted in arabesque. Having cleared it out, they found an entrance into another chamber. In this way they went forward from room to room; so that when I last heard, about a fortnight ago, they were arrived at the tenth apartment. The discovery has excited immense interest, no suspicion having been entertained of such a monument existing there. One room is covered with names of about the third or fourth century, only one of which had then been deciphered. But this excavation is further important in the way which I mentioned first. For I ought to have told you, that the first piece of antiquity discovered was a portion of the wall of Tullius, the early King of Rome; and this recurring at a distance from a portion found, a few years ago, in the Jesuits' neighbouring vineyard, in planting new vines, decides the direction of the wall, and the boundary of the primitive city.

But at times, the manner in which the ancient city comes out of the modern, is even more singular, and resembles more nearly the labours of the geologist. For example, the antiquarian of nature will smite a piece of lias; and, in the fracture which he makes, discovers the exact figure of a fish; or sometimes he will find fossil shells firmly embedded in a hard stone. Something like this happened a few years ago, in the last pontificate. It was thought well to disencumber one of the gates (*Porta Maggiore*) of an ugly bastion, which disfigured its side. A most singular discovery ensued. In it was found perfectly embedded, so that no one could have conjectured its being there, one of the most peculiar sepulchres yet known. It is almost, if not entirely, built up of stone troughs used in kneading bread, the whole process of which is displayed on *basso-relievos* round the sepulchre. An inscription of very ancient style, several times repeated, informs us that a baker and bread contractor had erected it to his wife, whose body is buried in what he calls "this bakery" (*in hoc panario*). Being very near the gate and very solid it had been encased in brickwork, and converted into the core of a projecting tower.

These examples may suffice to illustrate in what way ancient and modern Rome are straitly united, and how the latter keeps giving light to new hidden monuments of the former. I have not spoken of the discoveries of single and smaller objects, as statues, inscriptions, and blocks of rare marble. Neither have I entered into the more sacred precincts of ecclesiastical antiquities. Were I to do so, I should have yet to detain you long; I hasten, therefore, to a few concluding reflections.

If we look at Rome as the great conservator of ancient art, as intended to collect and treasure up, and then manifest to the world, what antiquity considered the most beautiful, I have sufficiently explained how amply she has fulfilled her mission. Reading in history, not the will of men, but the dispensations of the world's Almighty Master, tracing through all the crooked lines, the blots and blurrs, the erasures and emendations of those who write their annals in this world's book of fame, the straight and fair, and ever undeviating lines of the Hand which overrules them, we see how all that has happened in, and to, Rome, was needful and most wisely ordained, for the accomplishment of a great worldly end.

But can we pause here? When we contemplated the alarms, the dangers, and the afflictions of those who dwelt in Rome during her ages of oppression, when we inferred how natural it would have been for them to have migrated to a happier and safer spot, we stopped short of the reasons which prevented them, of the reasons which influenced their minds, of the reason which so directed their counsels.

Who can doubt as to the first? The inhabitant of any other city could roam abroad, could carry with him his household furniture, and, if a heathen, his household gods, could erect a new hearth, and gather his children round it. So could Alba and Tusculum move, and so Thebes or Babylon. But not so Rome. The Roman could not remove with him the very stones of his city which were dear, the very dust of his roads which was sacred, to

him. He could not bear away the prison in which Paul was Christ's bondsman ; he could not carry off the Janiculum on which Peter was crucified ; he could not transplant the glorious sepulchre in which both were laid. Nor could he transport the memorials of Laurence and Agnes, and the soil from the holy Sepulchre with which Helena had paved the church of the Holy Cross, nor the Catacombs with their myriads of martyrs, nor the basilicas with their thousand memories. He loved Rome, and not its wonders. Rome monumentless, undecked, ruined, trodden underfoot, was still to him the city of Peter, still the throne of his successors.

When I spoke of ancient cities that had passed away never to be rebuilt, I omitted mention of one, the only one that presented a parallel. When Jerusalem was for the first time destroyed, and its people taken into captivity, it was reserved to be a second time built up : for the very stones thereof were pleasing and venerable to God's servants. And, in like manner, no doubt, while Rome was comparatively a ruin, many a Jeremiah has sat upon a broken wall, and sighed over the Mistress of nations a tributary to barbarians, and the city once full of people, seated in the solitude of her own desolation. But the thought that she was to be abandoned never, for a moment, could have entered into his mind. The perpetuity of Rome was an axiom in the Christian's mouth, as much as it was a wish in the heathen's salutation, " *Esto perpetua.*"

If this was the bond which tied the inhabitants of Rome to their native city, had it not the high sanction of a Providence so singularly manifested ? Has there not been a strong and wonderful hand protecting it, and disposing of events, so as to point to a higher sphere and nobler range than a worldly importance, in the destiny of this city ? Can we read its history wisely, and doubt that, in the preservation of Rome something better was to be perpetuated than art, something holier maintained in endurance than letters, something sublimer secured to man than the traditions of a fallen Empire ? If a law ruled here different from that of other dominions, other dynasties, and other cities, it surely must be, that

the object for which the law was specially made, partakes not of the dissoluble, perishable elements of which *they* consist.

I will not pursue this matter further ; for I wish to draw a conclusion in which all may join. Whenever you go in search of ancient grandeur about Rome, upon any of its hills, round its walls, across the bare campagna, to the neighbouring mountains, one object surmounts all, crowns all, blesses all. It is the dome that swells over the tomb of the Galilean fisherman, surmounted by the Cross, through which alone he triumphed. As an ornament to his resting place, stands before its gate the obelisk which his persecutor Nero erected. This reflection drew an expression of his feelings from one whom all Europe now regards with admiration, as wise in counsel and mighty in war ; and it was this :—" The glory of Rome does not consist in the beauty of the modern city. For me it lies in beholding the remains of the old colossal empire lying prostrate in homage before the Cross."

With these words, spoken to me by Imperial lips, I close my Lecture.







